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Press Conference today by Interior Min Robert Lehr, Director of Fed
Office for Protection of Constitution, Otto John, SecState Hans Rietter von
Lex, Ministerialdirektor Hans Aegidi regarding arrest of Nazi plotters.

Lehr stated, whole affair been greatly exaggerated. "Too much honor,
importance been attached to it." Lehr said: "This not underground movement
but merely limited circle of individuals. We known about this for quite some
time, not needed warning from British. Circle been watched by Fed Office
for Protection of Constitution which exchanged information with British.

I not wanted German authorities intervene. For us basic law, article
nine, para two, not gave sufficient reason for action. British, however,
based their action on endangering security of occupation forces."

Following answers given to questions by newsmen:

Lehr: Circle no connection with North-Rhine Westphalia FDP-leader
Friedrich Middelhaue. Furthermore, no connection been established with
FDP either.

Lehr: As these people been arrested for endangering security of occu-
pation forces they be tried before British court -- if matter comes to trial.

John: We cannot give any further informati. knowledge this group

DISTRIBUTION as it endanger British investigation. Term "conspiracy" rather vague, goes
too far. These people not been arrested for their political conviction but

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Form 7-1 (Rev. 1-29)

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for their action or preparation for action.

Lehr: Meetings of this circle not so dangerous as to necessitate action on our part. British wanted not alone.

REBER

AUTH : FUB/OD:TKaghar

COMED: None

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FUB/OD:TKaghar/eb 1287

On 16 Jan 53, 1953, at 10:00 AM

January 15, 1953

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